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A TALE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE

THE HISTORY OF RASSELAS, PRINCE OF ABISSINIA.

CHAP. XXVI.

The princeſs continues her remarks upon private life.

NEKAYAH perceiving her brother's attention fixed, proceeded in her narrative.

"In families, where there is or is not poverty, there is commonly diſcord: if a kingdom be, as Imlac tells

us, a great family, a family likewiſe is a little kingdom, torn with factions and expoſed to revolutions. An unpractiſed obſerver expects the love of parents and children to be conſtant and equal; but this kindneſs ſeldom continues beyond the years of infancy: in a ſhort time the children become rivals to their parents. Benefits are allayed by reproaches, and gratitude debaſed by envy.

" Parents and children ſeldom act in concert: each child endeavours to appropriate the eſteem or fondneſs of the parents, and the parents, with yet leſs temptation, betray each other to their children; thus ſome place their confidence in the father, and ſome in the mother, and, by degrees, the houſe is filled with artifices and feuds.

" The

"The opinions of children and parents, of the young and the old, are naturally oppoſite, by the contrary effects of hope and deſpondence, of expectation and experience, without crime or folly on either ſide. The colours of life in youth and age appear different, as the face of nature in ſpring and winter. And how can children credit the aſſertions of parents, which their own eyes ſhow them to be falſe?

"Few parents act in ſuch a manner as much to enforce their maxims by the credit of their lives. The old man truſts wholly to ſlow contrivance and gradual progreſſion: the youth expects to force his way by genius, vigour, and precipitance. The old man pays regard to riches, and the youth reverences virtue.

The old man deifies prudence: the youth commits himſelf to magnanimity and chance. The young man, who intends no ill, believes that none is intended, and therefore acts with openneſs and candour: but his father, having ſuffered the injuries of fraud, is impelled to ſuſpect, and too often allured to practiſe it. Age looks with anger on the temerity of youth, and youth with contempt on the ſcrupuloſity of age. Thus parents and children, for the greateſt part, live on to love leſs and leſs: and, if thoſe whom nature has thus cloſely united are the torments of each other, where ſhall we look for tenderneſs and conſolation?"

"Surely, ſaid the prince, you muſt have been unfortunate in your choice of ac-

acquaintance: I am unwilling to believe, that the moſt tender of all relations is thus impeded in its effects by natural neceſſity."

"Domeſtick diſcord, anſwered ſhe, is not inevitably and fatally neceſſary; but yet is not eaſily avoided. We ſeldom ſee that a whole family is virtuous: the good and evil cannot well agree; and the evil can yet leſs agree with one another: even the virtuous fall ſometimes to variance, when their virtues are of different kinds, and tending to extremes. In general, thoſe parents have moſt reverence who moſt deſerve it: for he that lives well cannot be deſpiſed.

"Many other evils infeſt private life. Some are the ſlaves of ſervants whom they have truſted with their affairs. Some are kept in continual anxiety to the ca-

price of rich relations, whom they cannot pleaſe, and dare not offend. Some huſbands are imperious, and ſome wives perverſe: and, as it is always more eaſy to do evil than good, though the wiſdom or virtue of one can very rarely make many happy, the folly or vice of one may often make many miſerable."

"If ſuch be the general effect of marriage, ſaid the prince, I ſhall, for the future, think it dangerous to connect my intereſt with that of another, leſt I ſhould be unhappy by my partner's fault."

"I have met, ſaid the princeſs, with many who live ſingle for that reaſon; but I never found that their prudence ought to raiſe envy. They dream away their time

time without friendſhip, without fondneſs, and are driven to rid themſelves of the day, for which they have no uſe, by childiſh amuſements, or vicious delights. They act as beings under the conſtant ſenſe of ſome known inferiority, that fills their minds with rancour, and their tongues with cenſure. They are peeviſh at home, and malevolent abroad; and, as the out-laws of human nature, make it their buſineſs and their pleaſure to diſturb that ſociety which debars them from its privileges. To live without feeling or exciting ſympathy, to be fortunate without adding to the felicity of others, or afflicted without taſting the balm of pity, is a ſtate more gloomy than ſolitude: it is not retreat but excluſion from mankind. Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleaſures."

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"What then is to be done? ſaid Raſſelas; the more we enquire, the leſs we can reſolve. Surely he is moſt likely to pleaſe himſelf that has no other inclination to regard."

CHAP. XXVII.

Diſquiſition upon greatneſs.

THE converſation had a ſhort pauſe. The prince, having conſidered his ſiſter's obſervations, told her, that ſhe had ſurveyed life with prejudice, and ſuppoſed miſery where ſhe did not find it. "Your narrative, ſays he, throws yet a darker gloom upon the proſpects of futurity: the predictions of Imlac were but faint ſketches of the evils painted by Nekayah. I have been lately

lately convinced that quiet is not the daughter of grandeur, or of power: that her preſence is not to be bought by wealth, nor enforced by conqueſt. It is evident, that as any man acts in a wider compaſs, he muſt be more expoſed to oppoſition from enmity, or miſcarriage from chance; whoever has many to pleaſe or to govern, muſt uſe the miniſtry of many agents, ſome of whom will be wicked, and ſome ignorant; by ſome he will be miſled, and by others betrayed. If he gratifies one he will offend another: thoſe that are not favoured will think themſelves injured; and, ſince favours can be conferred but upon few, the greater number will be always diſcontented."

" The

"The diſcontent, ſaid the princeſs, which is thus unreaſonable, I hope that I ſhall always have ſpirit to deſpiſe, and you, power to repreſs."

"Diſcontent, anſwered Raſſelas, will not always be without reaſon under the moſt juſt or vigilant adminiſtration of publick affairs. None, however attentive, can always diſcover that merit which indigence or faction may happen to obſcure; and none, however powerful, can always reward it. Yet, he that ſees inferiour deſert advanced above him, will naturally impute that preference to partiality or caprice; and, indeed, it can ſcarcely be hoped that any man, however magnanimous by nature, or exalted by condition, will be able to perſiſt for ever in fixed

fixed and inexorable juſtice of diſtribution: he will ſometimes indulge his own affections, and ſometimes thoſe of his favourites; he will permit ſome to pleaſe him who can never ſerve him; he will diſcover in thoſe whom he loves qualities which in reality they do not poſſeſs; and to thoſe, from whom he receives pleaſure, he will in his turn endeavour to give it. Thus will recommendations ſometimes prevail which were purchaſed by money, or by the more deſtructive bribery of flattery and ſervility.

"He that has much to do will do ſomething wrong, and of that wrong muſt ſuffer the conſequences; and, if it were poſſible that he ſhould always act rightly, yet when ſuch numbers are to judge of his conduct, the bad will cenſure

ſure and obſtruct him by malevolence, and the good ſometimes by miſtake.

"The higheſt ſtations cannot therefore hope to be the abodes of happineſs, which I would willingly believe to have fled from thrones and palaces to ſeats of humble privacy and placid obſcurity. For what can hinder the ſatisfaction, or intercept the expectations, of him whoſe abilities are adequate to his employments, who ſees with his own eyes the whole circuit of his influence, who chooſes by his own knowledge all whom he truſts, and whom none are tempted to deceive by hope or fear? Surely he has nothing to do but to love and to be loved, to be virtuous and to be happy."

"Whe-

"Whether perfect happineſs would be procured by perfect goodneſs, ſaid Nekayah, this world will never afford an opportunity of deciding. But this, at leaſt, may be maintained, that we do not always find viſible happineſs in proportion to viſible virtue. All natural and almoſt all political evils, are incident alike to the bad and good: they are confounded in the miſery of a famine, and not much diſtinguiſhed in the fury of a faction; they ſink together in a tempeſt, and are driven together from their country by invaders. All that virtue can afford is quietneſs of conſcience, a ſteady proſpect of a happier ſtate; this may enable us to endure calamity with patience; but remember that patience muſt ſuppoſe pain."

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Raſſelas and Nekayah continue their converſation.

"DEAR princeſs, ſaid Raſſelas, you fall into the common errours of exaggeratory declamation, by producing, in a familiar diſquiſition, examples of national calamities, and ſcenes of extenſive miſery, which are found in books rather than in the world, and which, as they are horrid, are ordained to be rare. Let us not imagine evils which we do not feel, nor injure life by miſrepreſentations. I cannot bear that querelous eloquence which threatens every city with a ſiege like that of Jeruſalem,

ſalem, that makes famine attend on every flight of locuſts, and ſuſpends peſtilence on the wing of every blaſt that iſſues from the ſouth.

"On neceſſary and inevitable evils, which overwhelm kingdoms at once, all diſputation is vain: when they happen they muſt be endured. But it is evident, that theſe burſts of univerſal diſtreſs are more dreaded than felt: thouſands and ten thouſands flouriſh in youth, and wither in age, without the knowledge of any other than domeſtick evils, and ſhare the ſame pleaſures and vexations whether their kings are mild or cruel, whether the armies of their country perſue their enemies, or retreat before them. While courts are diſturbed with inteſtine competitions, and ambaſſadours are negotiating

gotiating in foreign countries, the ſmith ſtill plies his anvil, and the huſbandman drives his plow forward; the neceſſaries of life are required and obtained, and the ſucceſſive buſineſs of the ſeaſons continues to make its wonted revolutions."

"Let us ceaſe to conſider what, perhaps, may never happen, and what, when it ſhall happen, will laugh at human ſpeculation. We will not endeavour to modify the motions of the elements, or to fix the deſtiny of kingdoms. It is our buſineſs to conſider what beings like us may perform; each labouring for his own happineſs, by promoting within his circle, however narrow, the happineſs of others.

"Mar-

"Marriage is evidently the dictate of nature; men and women were made to be companions of each other, and therefore I cannot be perſuaded but that marriage is one of the means of happineſs."

"I know not, ſaid the princeſs, whether marriage be more than one of the innumerable modes of human miſery. When I ſee and reckon the various forms of connubial infelicity, the unexpected cauſes of laſting diſcord, the diverſities of temper, the oppoſitions of opinion, the rude colliſions of contrary deſire where both are urged by violent impulſes, the obſtinate conteſts of diſagreeing virtues, where both are ſupported by conſciouſneſs of good intention, I am ſometimes diſpoſed to think with the ſeverer caſuiſts of moſt nations, that mar-

riage is rather permitted than approved, and that none, but by the inſtigation of a paſſion too much indulged, entangle themſelves with indiſſoluble compacts."

"You ſeem to forget, replied Raſſelas, that you have, even now, repreſented celibacy as leſs happy than marriage. Both conditions may be bad, but they cannot both be worſt. Thus it happens when wrong opinions are entertained, that they mutually deſtroy each other, and leave the mind open to truth."

"I did not expect, anſwered the princeſs, to hear that imputed to falſhood which is the conſequence only of frailty. To the mind, as to the eye, it is difficult to compare with exactneſs objects vaſt in their extent, and various in their parts.

parts. Where we ſee or conceive the whole at once we readily note the diſcriminations and decide the preference: but of two ſyſtems, of which neither can be ſurveyed by any human being in its full compaſs of magnitude and multiplicity of complication, where is the wonder, that judging of the whole by parts, I am alternately affected by one and the other as either preſſes on my memory or fancy? We differ from ourſelves juſt as we differ from each other, when we ſee only part of the queſtion, as in the multifarious relations of politicks and morality: but when we perceive the whole at once, as in numerical computations, all agree in one judgment, and none ever varies his opinion."

"Let us not add, ſaid the prince, to the other evils of life, the bitterneſs of controverſy, nor endeavour to vie with each other in ſubtilties of argument. We are employed in a ſearch, of which both are equally to enjoy the ſucceſs, or ſuffer by the miſcarriage. It is therefore fit that we aſſiſt each other. You ſurely conclude too haſtily from the infelicity of marriage againſt its inſtitution; will not the miſery of life prove equally that life cannot be the gift of heaven? The world muſt be peopled by marriage, or peopled without it."

"How the world is to be peopled, returned Nekayah, is not my care, and needs not be yours. I ſee no danger that the preſent generation ſhould omit to leave ſucceſſors behind them: we are not now

now enquiring for the world, but for ourſelves."

CHAP. XXIX.

The debate on marriage continued.

"THE good of the whole, ſays Raſſelas, is the ſame with the good of all its parts. If marriage be beſt for mankind it muſt be evidently beſt for individuals, or a permanent and neceſſary duty muſt be the cauſe of evil, and ſome muſt be inevitably ſacrificed to the convenience of others. In the eſtimate which you have made of the two ſtates, it appears that the incommodities of a ſingle life are, in a great

measure, neceſſary and certain, but thoſe of the conjugal ſtate accidental and avoidable.

"I cannot forbear to flatter myſelf that prudence and benevolence will make marriage happy. The general folly of mankind is the cauſe of general complaint. What can be expected but diſappointment and repentance from a choice made in the immaturity of youth, in the ardour of deſire, without judgment, without foreſight, without enquiry after conformity of opinions, ſimilarity of manners, rectitude of judgment, or purity of ſentiment.

"Such is the common proceſs of marriage. A youth and maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities,

lities, go home, and dream of one another. Having little to divert attention, or diverſify thought, they find themſelves uneaſy when they are apart, and therefore conclude that they ſhall be happy together. They marry, and diſcover what nothing but voluntary blindneſs had before concealed; they wear out life in altercations, and charge nature with cruelty.

"From thoſe early marriages proceeds likewiſe the rivalry of parents and children: the ſon is eager to enjoy the world before the father is willing to forſake it, and there is hardly room at once for two generations. The daughter begins to bloom before the mother can be content to fade, and neither can forbear to wiſh for the abſence of the other.

"Surely all theſe evils may be avoided by that deliberation and delay which prudence preſcribes to irrevocable choice. In the variety and jollity of youthful pleaſures life may be well enough ſupported without the help of a partner. Longer time will encreaſe experience, and wider views will allow better opportunities of enquiry and ſelection: one advantage, at leaſt, will be certain; the parents will be viſibly older than their children."

"What reaſon cannot collect, ſaid Nekayah, and what experiment has not yet taught, can be known only from the report of others. I have been told that late marriages are not eminently happy. This is a queſtion too important to be neglected, and I have often propoſed it to

thoſe,

thoſe, whoſe accuracy of remark, and comprehenſiveneſs of knowledge, made their ſuffrages worthy of regard. They have generally determined, that it is dangerous for a man and woman to ſuſpend their fate upon each other, at a time when opinions are fixed, and habits are eſtabliſhed; when friendſhips have been contracted on both ſides, when life has been planned into method, and the mind has long enjoyed the contemplation of its own proſpects.

"It is ſcarcely poſſible that two travelling through the world under the conduct of chance, ſhould have been both directed to the ſame path, and it will not often happen that either will quit the track which cuſtom has made pleaſing. When the deſultory levity of

of youth has ſettled into regularity, it is ſoon ſucceeded by pride aſhamed to yield, or obſtinacy delighting to contend. And even though mutual eſteem produces mutual deſire to pleaſe, time itſelf, as it modifies unchangeably the external mien, determines likewiſe the direction of the paſſions, and gives an inflexible rigidity to the manners. Long cuſtoms are not eaſily broken: he that attempts to change the courſe of his own life, very often labours in vain; and how ſhall we do that for others which we are ſeldom able to do for ourſelves?"

"But ſurely, interpoſed the prince, you ſuppoſe the chief motive of choice forgotten or neglected. Whenever I ſhall ſeek a wife, it ſhall be my firſt queſ-

queſtion, whether ſhe be willing to be led by reaſon?"

"Thus it is, ſaid Nekayah, that philoſophers are deceived. There are a thouſand familiar diſputes which reaſon never can decide; queſtions that elude inveſtigation, and make logick ridiculous; caſes where ſomething muſt be done, and where little can be ſaid. Conſider the ſtate of mankind, and enquire how few can be ſuppoſed to act upon any occaſions, whether ſmall or great, with all the reaſons of action preſent to their minds. Wretched would be the pair above all names of wretchedneſs, who ſhould be doomed to adjuſt by reaſon every morning all the minute detail of a domeſtick day.

" Thoſe who marry at an advanced age, will probably eſcape the encroachments of their children; but, in diminution of this advantage, they will be likely to leave them, ignorant and helpleſs, to a guardian's mercy: or, if that ſhould not happen, they muſt at leaſt go out of the world before they ſee thoſe whom they love beſt either wiſe or great.

" From their children, if they have leſs to fear, they have leſs alſo to hope, and they loſe, without equivalent, the joys of early love, and the convenience of uniting with manners pliant, and minds ſuſceptible of new impreſſions, which might wear away their diſſimilitudes by long cohabitation, as ſoft bodies, by continual attrition, conform their ſurfaces to each other.

" I

"I believe it will be found that thoſe who marry late are beſt pleaſed with their children, and thoſe who marry early with their partners."

"The union of theſe two affections, ſaid Raſſelas, would produce all that could be wiſhed. Perhaps there is a time when marriage might unite them, a time neither too early for the father, nor too late for the huſband."

"Every hour, anſwered the princeſs, confirms my prejudice in favour of the poſition ſo often uttered by the mouth of Imlac, 'That nature ſets her gifts on the right hand and on the left.' Thoſe conditions, which flatter hope and attract deſire, are ſo conſtituted, that, as we approach one, we recede from another. There

There are goods ſo oppoſed that we cannot ſeize both, but, by too much prudence, may paſs between them at too great a diſtance to reach either. This is often the fate of long conſideration; he does nothing who endeavours to do more than is allowed to humanity. Flatter not yourſelf with contrarieties of pleaſure. Of the bleſſings ſet before you make your choice, and be content. No man can taſte the fruits of autumn while he is delighting his ſcent with the flowers of the ſpring: no man can, at the ſame time, fill his cup from the ſource and from the mouth of the Nile."

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

Imlac enters, and changes the converſation.

HERE Imlac entered, and interrupted them. "Imlac, ſaid Raſſelas, I have been taking from the princeſs the diſmal hiſtory of private life, and am almoſt diſcouraged from further ſearch."

"It ſeems to me, ſaid Imlac, that while you are making the choice of life, you neglect to live. You wander about a ſingle city, which, however large and di-

diverſified, can now afford few novelties, and forget that you are in a country, famous among the earlieſt monarchies for the power and wiſdom of its inhabitants; a country where the ſciences firſt dawned that illuminate the world, and beyond which the arts cannot be traced of civil ſociety or domeſtick life.

"The old Egyptians have left behind them monuments of induſtry and power before which all European magnificence is confeſſed to fade away. The ruins of their architecture are the ſchools of modern builders, and from the wonders which time has ſpared we may conjecture, though uncertainly, what it has deſtroyed."

"My

"My curioſity, ſaid Raſſelas, does not very ſtrongly lead me to ſurvey piles of ſtone, or mounds of earth; my buſineſs is with man. I came hither not to meaſure fragments of temples, or trace choaked aqueducts, but to look upon the various ſcenes of the preſent world."

"The things that are now before us, ſaid the princeſs, require attention, and deſerve it. What have I to do with the heroes or the monuments of ancient times? with times which never can return, and heroes, whoſe form of life was different from all that the preſent condition of mankind requires or allows."

"To know any thing, returned the poet, we muſt know its effects; to ſee men we muſt ſee their works, that we

may learn what reaſon has dictated, or paſſion has incited, and find what are the moſt powerful motives of action. To judge rightly of the preſent we muſt oppoſe it to the paſt; for all judgment is comparative, and of the future nothing can be known. The truth is, that no mind is much employed upon the preſent: recollection and anticipation fill up almoſt all our moments. Our paſſions are joy and grief, love and hatred, hope and fear. Of joy and grief the paſt is the object, and the future of hope and fear; even love and hatred reſpect the paſt, for the cauſe muſt have been before the effect.

" The preſent ſtate of things is the conſequence of the former, and it is natural to inquire what were the ſources of

of the good that we enjoy, or of the evil that we ſuffer. If we act only for ourſelves, to neglect the ſtudy of hiſtory is not prudent: if we are entruſted with the care of others, it is not juſt. Ignorance, when it is voluntary, is criminal; and he may properly be charged with evil who refuſed to learn how he might prevent it.

"There is no part of hiſtory ſo generally uſeful as that which relates the progreſs of the human mind, the gradual improvement of reaſon, the ſucceſſive advances of ſcience, the viciſſitudes of learning and ignorance, which are the light and darkneſs of thinking beings, the extinction and reſuſcitation of arts, and the revolutions of the intellectual world. If accounts of battles and invaſions are

peculiarly the buſineſs of princes, the uſeful or elegant arts are not to be neglected; thoſe who have kingdoms to govern, have underſtandings to cultivate.

"Example is always more efficacious than precept. A ſoldier is formed in war, and a painter muſt copy pictures. In this, contemplative life has the advantage: great actions are ſeldom ſeen, but the labours of art are always at hand for thoſe who deſire to know what art has been able to perform.

"When the eye or the imagination is ſtruck with any uncommon work, the next tranſition of an active mind is to the means by which it was performed. Here begins the true uſe of ſuch contemplation; we enlarge our compre-

henſion by new ideas, and perhaps recover ſome art loſt to mankind, or learn what is leſs perfectly known in our own country. At leaſt we compare our own with former times, and either rejoice at our improvements, or, what is the firſt motion towards good, diſcover our defects."

"I am willing, ſaid the prince, to ſee all that can deſerve my ſearch." "And I, ſaid the princeſs, ſhall rejoice to learn ſomething of the manners of antiquity."

"The moſt pompous monument of Egyptian greatneſs, and one of the moſt bulky works of manual induſtry, ſaid Imlac, are the pyramids; fabricks raiſed before the time of hiſtory, and of which the earlieſt narratives afford us only un-

certain traditions. Of theſe the greateſt is ſtill ſtanding very little injured by time."

"Let us viſit them to morrow, ſaid Nekayah. I have often heard of the Pyramids, and ſhall not reſt, till I have ſeen them within and without with my own eyes."

CHAP. XXXI.

They viſit the Pyramids.

THE reſolution being thus taken, they ſet out the next day. They laid tents upon their camels, being reſolved to ſtay among the pyramids till their curioſity was fully ſatisfied. They travelled

velled gently, turned aſide to every thing remarkable, ſtopped from time to time and converſed with the inhabitants, and obſerved the various appearances of towns ruined and inhabited, of wild and cultivated nature.

When they came to the great pyramid they were aſtoniſhed at the extent of the baſe, and the height of the top. Imlac explained to them the principles upon which the pyramidal form was choſen for a fabrick intended to co-extend its duration with that of the world: he ſhowed that its gradual diminution gave it ſuch ſtability, as defeated all the common attacks of the elements, and could ſcarcely be overthrown by earthquakes themſelves, the leaſt reſiſtible of natural violence. A concuſſion that

ſhould ſhatter the pyramid would threaten the diſſolution of the continent.

They meaſured all its dimenſions, and pitched their tents at its foot. Next day they prepared to enter its interiour apartments, and having hired the common guides climbed up to the firſt paſſage, when the favourite of the princeſs, looking into the cavity, ſtepped back and trembled. "Pekuah, ſaid the princeſs, of what art thou afraid?" "Of the narrow entrance, anſwered the lady, and of the dreadful gloom. I dare not enter a place which muſt ſurely be inhabited by unquiet ſouls. The original poſſeſſors of theſe dreadful vaults will ſtart up before us, and, perhaps, ſhut us in for ever." She ſpoke, and threw her arms round the neck of her miſtreſs.

"If

"If all your fear be of apparitions, ſaid the prince, I will promiſe you ſafety: there is no danger from the dead; he that is once buried will be ſeen no more."

"That the dead are ſeen no more, ſaid Imlac, I will not undertake to maintain againſt the concurrent and unvaried teſtimony of all ages, and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which, perhaps, prevails as far as human nature is diffuſed, could become univerſal only by its truth: thoſe, that never heard of one another, would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by ſingle cavillers can very little weaken the general evidence, and

and ſome who deny it with their tongues confeſs it by their fears.

"Yet I do not mean to add new terrours to thoſe which have already ſeized upon Pekuah. There can be no reaſon why ſpectres ſhould haunt the pyramid more than other places, or why they ſhould have power or will to hurt innocence and purity. Our entrance is no violation of their privileges; we can take nothing from them, how then can we offend them?"

"My dear Pekuah, ſaid the princeſs, I will always go before you, and Imlac ſhall follow you. Remember that you are the companion of the Princeſs of Abiſſinia."

"If

"If the princeſs is pleaſed that her ſervant ſhould die, returned the lady, let her command ſome death leſs dreadful than incloſure in this horrid cavern. You know I dare not diſobey you: I muſt go if you command me; but, if I once enter, I never ſhall come back."

The princeſs ſaw that her fear was too ſtrong for expoſtulation or reproof, and embracing her, told her that ſhe ſhould ſtay in the tent till their return. Pekuah was yet not ſatisfied, but entreated the princeſs not to perſue ſo dreadful a purpoſe as that of entering the receſſes of the pyramid. "Though I cannot teach courage, ſaid Nekayah, I muſt not learn cowardiſe; nor leave at laſt undone what I came hither only to do."

CHAP. XXXII.

They enter the Pyramid.

PEKUAH deſcended to the tents, and the reſt entered the Pyramid: they paſſed through the galleries, ſurveyed the vaults of marble, and examined the cheſt in which the body of the founder is ſuppoſed to have been repoſited. They then ſat down in one of the moſt ſpacious chambers to reſt a while before they attempted to return.

"We have now, ſaid Imlac, gratified our minds with an exact view of the greateſt work of man, except the wall of China.

"Of

" Of the wall it is very eaſy to aſſign the motives. It ſecured a wealthy and timorous nation from the incurſions of Barbarians, whoſe unſkilfulneſs in arts made it eaſier for them to ſupply their wants by rapine than by induſtry, and who from time to time poured in upon the habitations of peaceful commerce, as vultures deſcend upon domeſtick fowl. Their celerity and fierceneſs made the wall neceſſary, and their ignorance made it efficacious.

" But for the pyramids no reaſon has ever been given adequate to the coſt and labour of the work. The narrowneſs of the chambers proves that it could afford no retreat from enemies, and treaſures might have been repoſited at far leſs expence with equal ſecurity. It ſeems to have

have been erected only in compliance with that hunger of imagination which preys inceſſantly upon life, and muſt be always appeaſed by ſome employment. Thoſe who have already all that they can enjoy, muſt enlarge their deſires. He that has built for uſe, till uſe is ſupplied, muſt begin to build for vanity, and extend his plan to the utmoſt power of human performance, that he may not be ſoon reduced to form another wiſh.

"I conſider this mighty ſtructure as a monument of the inſufficiency of human enjoyments. A king, whoſe power is unlimited, and whoſe treaſures ſurmount all real and imaginary wants, is compelled to ſolace, by the erection of a pyramid, the ſatiety of dominion and taſteleſneſs of pleaſures, and to amuſe the

the tediouſneſs of declining life, by ſeeing thouſands labouring without end, and one ſtone, for no purpoſe, laid upon another. Whoever thou art, that, not content with a moderate condition, imagineſt happineſs in royal magnificence, and dreameſt that command or riches can feed the appetite of novelty with perpetual gratifications, ſurvey the pyramids, and confeſs thy folly!"

CHAP. XXXIII.

The princeſs meets with an unexpected misfortune.

THEY roſe up, and returned through the cavity at which they had entered, and the princeſs prepared for

for her favourite a long narrative of dark labyrinths, and coſtly rooms, and of the different impreſſions which the varieties of the way had made upon her. But, when they came to their train, they found every one ſilent and dejected: the men diſcovered ſhame and fear in their countenances, and the women were weeping in the tents.

What had happened they did not try to conjecture, but immediately enquired. "You had ſcarcely entered into the pyramid, ſaid one of the attendants, when a troop of Arabs ruſhed upon us: we were too few to reſiſt them, and too ſlow to eſcape. They were about to ſearch the tents, ſet us on our camels, and drive us along before them, when the approach of ſome Turkiſh horſemen put them to flight;

flight; but they ſeized the lady Pekuah with her two maids, and carried them away: the Turks are now perſuing them by our inſtigation, but I fear they will not be able to overtake them."

The princeſs was overpowered with ſurpriſe and grief. Raſſelas, in the firſt heat of his reſentment, ordered his ſervants to follow him, and prepared to perſue the robbers with his ſabre in his hand. "Sir, ſaid Imlac, what can you hope from violence or valour? the Arabs are mounted on horſes trained to battle and retreat; we have only beaſts of burden. By leaving our preſent ſtation we may loſe the princeſs, but cannot hope to regain Pekuah."

In a ſhort time the Turks returned, having not been able to reach the enemy. The princeſs burſt out into new lamentations, and Raſſelas could ſcarcely forbear to reproach them with cowardice but Imlac was of opinion, that the eſcape of the Arabs was no addition to their misfortune, for, perhaps, they would have killed their captives rather than have reſigned them.

CHAP. XXXIV.

They return to Cairo without Pekuah.

THERE was nothing to be hoped from longer ſtay. They returned to Cairo repenting of their curioſity,

cenſuring the negligence of the government, lamenting their own raſhneſs which had neglected to procure a guard, imagining many expedients by which the loſs of Pekuah might have been prevented, and reſolving to do ſomething for her recovery, though none could find any thing proper to be done.

Nekayah retired to her chamber, where her women attempted to comfort her, by telling her that all had their troubles, and that lady Pekuah had enjoyed much happineſs in the world for a long time, and might reaſonably expect a change of fortune. They hoped that ſome good would befal her whereſoever ſhe was, and that their miſtreſs would find another friend who might ſupply her place.

The princeſs made them no anſwer, and they continued the form of condolence, not much grieved in their hearts that the favourite was loſt.

Next day the prince preſented to the Baſſa a memorial of the wrong which he had ſuffered, and a petition for redreſs. The Baſſa threatened to puniſh the robbers, but did not attempt to catch them, nor, indeed, could any account or deſcription be given by which he might direct the perſuit.

It ſoon appeared that nothing would be done by authority. Governors, being accuſtomed to hear of more crimes than they can puniſh, and more wrongs than they can redreſs, ſet themſelves at eaſe by indiſcriminate negligence, and pre-

preſently forget the requeſt when they loſe ſight of the petitioner.

Imlac then endeavoured to gain ſome intelligence by private agents. He found many who pretended to an exact knowledge of all the haunts of the Arabs, and to regular correſpondence with their chiefs, and who readily undertook the recovery of Pekuah. Of theſe, ſome were furniſhed with money for their journey, and came back no more; ſome were liberally paid for accounts which a few days diſcovered to be falſe. But the princeſs would not ſuffer any means, however improbable, to be left untried. While ſhe was doing ſomething ſhe kept her hope alive. As one expedient failed, another was ſuggeſted; when one meſ-

ſenger returned unſucceſsful, another was diſpatched to a different quarter.

Two months had now paſſed, and of Pekuah nothing had been heard; the hopes which they had endeavoured to raiſe in each other grew more languid, and the princeſs, when ſhe ſaw nothing more to be tried, ſunk down inconſolable in hopeleſs dejection. A thouſand times ſhe reproached herſelf with the eaſy compliance by which ſhe permitted her favourite to ſtay behind her. "Had not my fondneſs, ſaid ſhe, leſſened my authority, Pekuah had not dared to talk of her terrours. She ought to have feared me more than ſpectres. A ſevere look would have overpowered her; a peremptory command would have compelled obedience. Why did fooliſh indulgence

dulgence prevail upon me? Why did I not ſpeak and refuſe to hear?"

"Great princeſs, ſaid Imlac, do not reproach yourſelf for your virtue, or conſider that as blameable by which evil has accidentally been cauſed. Your tenderneſs for the timidity of Pekuah was generous and kind. When we act according to our duty, we commit the event to him by whoſe laws our actions are governed, and who will ſuffer none to be finally puniſhed for obedience. When, in proſpect of ſome good, whether natural or moral, we break the rules preſcribed us, we withdraw from the direction of ſuperiour wiſdom, and take all conſequences upon ourſelves. Man cannot ſo far know the connexion of cauſes and events, as that he may

venture to do wrong in order to do right. When we perſue our end by lawful means, we may always conſole our miſcarriage by the hope of future recompence. When we conſult only our own policy, and attempt to find a nearer way to good, by overleaping the ſettled boundaries of right and wrong, we cannot be happy even by ſucceſs, becauſe we cannot eſcape the conſciouſneſs of our fault; but, if we miſcarry, the diſappointment is irremediably embittered. How comfortleſs is the ſorrow of him, who feels at once the pangs of guilt, and the vexation of calamity which guilt has brought upon him?

"Conſider, princeſs, what would have been your condition, if the lady Pekuah had entreated to accompany you, and,

and, being compelled to ſtay in the tents, had been carried away; or how would you have born the thought, if you had forced her into the pyramid, and ſhe had died before you in agonies of terrour."

"Had either happened, ſaid Nekayah, I could not have endured life till now: I ſhould have been tortured to madneſs by the remembrance of ſuch cruelty, or muſt have pined away in abhorrence of myſelf."

"This, at leaſt, ſaid Imlac, is the preſent reward of virtuous conduct, that no unlucky conſequence can oblige us to repent it."

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXV.

The princeſs languiſhes for want of Pekuah.

NEKAYAH, being thus reconciled to herſelf, found that no evil is inſupportable but that which is accompanied with conſciouſneſs of wrong. She was, from that time, delivered from the violence of tempeſtuous ſorrow, and ſunk into ſilent penſiveneſs and gloomy tranquility. She ſat from morning to evening recollecting all that had been done or ſaid by her Pekuah, treaſured up with care every trifle on which Pekuah had ſet an accidental value, and which might recal to mind any little incident or

or careleſs converſation. The ſentiments of her, whom ſhe now expected to ſee no more, were treaſured in her memory as rules of life, and ſhe deliberated to no other end than to conjecture on any occaſion what would have been the opinion and counſel of Pekuah.

The women, by whom ſhe was attended, knew nothing of her real condition, and therefore ſhe could not talk to them but with caution and reſerve. She began to remit her curioſity, having no great care to collect notions which ſhe had no convenience of uttering. Raſſelas endeavoured firſt to comfort and afterwards to divert her; he hired muſicians, to whom ſhe ſeemed to liſten, but did not hear them, and procured maſters to inſtruct her in various arts, whoſe lec-

lectures, when they viſited her again, were again to be repeated. She had loſt her taſte of pleaſure and her ambition of excellence. And her mind, though forced into ſhort excurſions, always recurred to the image of her friend.

Imlac was every morning earneſtly enjoined to renew his enquiries, and was aſked every night whether he had yet heard of Pekuah, till not being able to return the princeſs the anſwer that ſhe deſired, he was leſs and leſs willing to come into her preſence. She obſerved his backwardneſs, and commanded him to attend her. "You are not, ſaid ſhe, to confound impatience with reſentment, or to ſuppoſe that I charge you with negligence, becauſe I repine at your unſucceſsfulneſs. I do not much wonder at your

your abſence; I know that the unhappy are never pleaſing, and that all naturally avoid the contagion of miſery. To hear complaints is wearifome alike to the wretched and the happy; for who would cloud by adventitious grief the ſhort gleams of gaity which life allows us? or who, that is ſtruggling under his own evils, will add to them the miſeries of another?

"The time is at hand, when none ſhall be diſturbed any longer by the ſighs of Nekayah: my ſearch after happineſs is now at an end. I am reſolved to retire from the world with all its flatteries and deceits, and will hide myſelf in ſolitude, without any other care than to compoſe my thoughts, and regulate my hours by a conſtant ſucceſſion of innocent occupations,

pations, till, with a mind purified from all earthly desires, I shall enter into that state, to which all are hastening, and in which I hope again to enjoy the friendship of Pekuah."

"Do not entangle your mind, said Imlac, by irrevocable determinations, nor increase the burden of life by a voluntary accumulation of misery: the weariness of retirement will continue or increase when the loss of Pekuah is forgotten. That you have been deprived of one pleasure is no very good reason for rejection of the rest."

"Since Pekuah was taken from me, said the princess, I have no pleasure to reject or to retain. She that has no one to love or trust has little to hope. She wants

wants the radical principle of happineſs. We may, perhaps, allow that what ſatisfaction this world can afford, muſt ariſe from the conjunction of wealth, knowledge and goodneſs: wealth is nothing but as it is beſtowed, and knowledge nothing but as it is communicated: they muſt therefore be imparted to others, and to whom could I now delight to impart them? Goodneſs affords the only comfort which can be enjoyed without a partner, and goodneſs may be practiſed in retirement."

"How far ſolitude may admit goodneſs, or advance it, I ſhall not, replied Imlac, diſpute at preſent. Remember the confeſſion of the pious hermit. You will wiſh to return into the world, when the image of your companion has left your thoughts." "That time, ſaid Nekayah,

kayah, will never come. The generous frankneſs, the modeſt obſequiouſneſs, and the faithful ſecrecy of my dear Pekuah, will always be more miſſed, as I ſhall live longer to ſee vice and folly."

"The ſtate of a mind oppreſſed with a ſudden calamity, ſaid Imlac, is like that of the fabulous inhabitants of the new created earth, who, when the firſt night came upon them, ſuppoſed that day never would return. When the clouds of ſorrow gather over us, we ſee nothing beyond them, nor can imagine how they will be diſpelled: yet a new day ſucceeded to the night, and ſorrow is never long without a dawn of eaſe. But they who reſtrain themſelves from receiving comfort, do as the ſavages would have done, had they put out their eyes when it was dark. Our minds, like

like our bodies, are in continual flux; ſomething is hourly loſt, and ſomething acquired. To loſe much at once is inconvenient to either, but while the vital powers remain uninjured, nature will find the means of reparation. Diſtance has the ſame effect on the mind as on the eye, and while we glide along the ſtream of time, whatever we leave behind us is always leſſening, and that which we approach increaſing in magnitude. Do not ſuffer life to ſtagnate; it will grow muddy for want of motion: commit yourſelf again to the current of the world; Pekuah will vaniſh by degrees; you will meet in your way ſome other favourite, or learn to diffuſe yourſelf in general converſation."

"At leaſt, ſaid the prince, do not deſpair before all remedies have been tried: the enquiry after the unfortunate lady is ſtill continued, and ſhall be carried on with yet greater diligence, on condition that you will promiſe to wait a year for the event, without any unalterable reſolution."

Nekayah thought this a reaſonable demand, and made the promiſe to her brother, who had been adviſed by Imlac to require it. Imlac had, indeed, no great hope of regaining Pekuah, but he ſuppoſed, that if he could ſecure the interval of a year, the princeſs would be then in no danger of a cloiſter.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Pekuah is ſtill remembered. The progreſs of ſorrow.

NEKAYAH, ſeeing that nothing was omitted for the recovery of her favourite, and having, by her promiſe, ſet her intention of retirement at a diſtance, began imperceptibly to return to common cares and common pleaſures. She rejoiced without her own conſent at the ſuſpenſion of her ſorrows, and ſometimes caught herſelf with indignation in the act of turning away her mind from the remembrance of her, whom yet ſhe reſolved never to forget.

She then appointed a certain hour of the day for meditation on the merits and fondneſs of Pekuah, and for ſome weeks retired conſtantly at the time fixed, and returned with her eyes ſwollen and her countenance clouded. By degrees ſhe grew leſs ſcrupulous, and ſuffered any important and preſſing avocation to delay the tribute of daily tears. She then yielded to leſs occaſions; ſometimes forgot what ſhe was indeed afraid to remember, and, at laſt, wholly releaſed herſelf from the duty of periodical affliction.

Her real love of Pekuah was yet not diminiſhed. A thouſand occurrences brought her back to memory, and a thouſand wants, which nothing but the confidence of friendſhip can ſupply, made her frequently regretted. She, there-

therefore, ſolicited Imlac never to deſiſt from enquiry, and to leave no art of intelligence untried, that, at leaſt, ſhe might have the comfort of knowing that ſhe did not ſuffer by negligence or ſluggiſhneſs. "Yet what, ſaid ſhe, is to be expected from our perſuit of happineſs, when we find the ſtate of life to be ſuch, that happineſs itſelf is the cauſe of miſery? Why ſhould we endeavour to attain that, of which the poſſeſſion cannot be ſecured? I ſhall henceforward fear to yield my heart to excellence, however bright, or to fondneſs, however tender, leſt I ſhould loſe again what I have loſt in Pekuah."

CHAP. XXXVII.

The princeſs hears news of Pekuah.

IN ſeven months, one of the meſſengers, who had been ſent away upon the day when the promiſe was drawn from the princeſs, returned, after many unſucceſsful rambles, from the borders of Nubia, with an account that Pekuah was in the hands of an Arab chief, who poſſeſſed a caſtle or fortreſs on the extremity of Egypt. The Arab, whoſe revenue was plunder, was willing to reſtore her, with her two attendants, for two hundred ounces of gold.

The price was no ſubject of debate. The princeſs was in extaſies when ſhe heard that her favourite was alive, and might ſo cheaply be ranſomed. She could not think of delaying for a moment Pekuah's happineſs or her own, but entreated her brother to ſend back the meſſenger with the ſum required. Imlac, being conſulted, was not very confident of the veracity of the relator, and was ſtill more doubtful of the Arab's faith, who might, if he were too liberally truſted, detain at once the money and the captives. He thought it dangerous to put themſelves in the power of the Arab, by going into his diſtrict, and could not expect that the Rover would ſo much expoſe himſelf as to come into the lower country, where he might be ſeized by the forces of the Baſſa.

It is difficult to negotiate where neither will truſt. But Imlac, after ſome deliberation, directed the meſſenger to propoſe that Pekuah ſhould be conducted by ten horſemen to the monaſtry of St. Anthony, which is ſituated in the deſerts of Upper-Egypt, where ſhe ſhould be met by the ſame number, and her ranſome ſhould be paid.

That no time might be loſt, as they expected that the propoſal would not be refuſed, they immediately began their journey to the monaſtry; and, when they arrived, Imlac went forward with the former meſſenger to the Arab's fortreſs. Raſſelas was deſirous to go with them, but neither his ſiſter nor Imlac would conſent. The Arab, according to the cuſtom of his nation, obſerved the laws

of

of hoſpitality with great exactneſs to thoſe who put themſelves into his power, and, in a few days, brought Pekuah with her maids, by eaſy journeys, to their place appointed, where receiving the ſtipulated price, he reſtored her with great reſpect to liberty and her friends, and undertook to conduct them back towards Cairo beyond all danger of robbery or violence.

The princeſs and her favourite embraced each other with tranſport too violent to be expreſſed, and went out together to pour the tears of tenderneſs in ſecret, and exchange profeſſions of kindneſs and gratitude. After a few hours they returned into the refectory of the convent, where, in the preſence of the prior and his brethren, the prince required

quired of Pekuah the hiſtory of her adventures.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

The adventures of the lady Pekuah.

"AT what time, and in what manner, I was forced away, ſaid Pekuah, your ſervants have told you. The ſuddenneſs of the event ſtruck me with ſurpriſe, and I was at firſt rather ſtupified than agitated with any paſſion of either fear or ſorrow. My confuſion was encreaſed by the ſpeed and tumult of our flight while we were followed by the Turks, who, as it ſeemed, ſoon deſpaired to overtake us, or were afraid of thoſe whom they made a ſhew of menacing.

"When

" When the Arabs ſaw themſelves out of danger they ſlackened their courſe, and as I was leſs haraſſed by external violence, I began to feel more uneaſineſs in my mind. After ſome time we ſtopped near a ſpring ſhaded with trees in a pleaſant meadow, where we were ſet upon the ground, and offered ſuch refreſhments as our maſters were partaking. I was ſuffered to ſit with my maids apart from the reſt, and none attempted to comfort or inſult us. Here I firſt began to feel the full weight of my miſery. The girls ſat weeping in ſilence, and from time to time looked on me for ſuccour. I knew not to what condition we were doomed, nor could conjecture where would be the place of our captivity, or whence to draw any hope of deliverance. I was in the hands of robbers

bers and ſavages, and had no reaſon to ſuppoſe that their pity was more than their juſtice, or that they would forbear the gratification of any ardour of deſire, or caprice of cruelty. I, however, kiſſed my maids, and endeavoured to pacify them by remarking, that we were yet treated with decency, and that, ſince we were now carried beyond perſuit, there was no danger of violence to our lives.

" When we were to be ſet again on horſeback, my maids clung round me, and refuſed to be parted, but I commanded them not to irritate thoſe who had us in their power. We travelled the remaining part of the day through an unfrequented and pathleſs country, and came by moonlight to the ſide of a hill, where the reſt of the troop was ſtationed.

tioned. Their tents were pitched, and their fires kindled, and our chief was welcomed as a man much beloved by his dependants.

"We were received into a large tent, where we found women who had attended their huſbands in the expedition. They ſet before us the ſupper which they had provided, and I eat it rather to encourage my maids than to comply with any appetite of my own. When the meat was taken away they ſpread the carpets for repoſe. I was weary, and hoped to find in ſleep that remiſſion of diſtreſs which nature ſeldom denies. Ordering myſelf therefore to be undreſt, I obſerved that the women looked very earneſtly upon me, not expecting, I ſuppoſe, to ſee me ſo ſubmiſſively attended.

When

When my upper veſt was taken off, they were apparently ſtruck with the ſplendour of my cloaths, and one of them amorouſly laid her hand upon the embroidery. She then went out, and, in a ſhort time, came back with another woman, who ſeemed to be of higher rank, and greater authority. She did, at her entrance, the uſual act of reverence, and, taking me by the hand, placed me in a ſmaller tent, ſpread with finer carpets, where I ſpent the night quietly with my maids.

" In the morning, as I was ſitting on the graſs, the chief of the troop came towards me. I roſe up to receive him, and he bowed with great reſpect. " Illuſtrious lady, ſaid he, my fortune is better than I had preſumed to hope; I am told by my women, that I have a princeſs

ceſs in my camp." Sir, anſwered I, your women have deceived themſelves and you; I am not a princeſs, but an unhappy ſtranger who intended ſoon to have left this country, in which I am now to be impriſoned for ever." "Whoever, or whenceſoever, you are, returned the Arab, your dreſs, and that of your ſervants, ſhow your rank to be high, and your wealth to be great. Why ſhould you, who can ſo eaſily procure your ranſome, think yourſelf in danger of perpetual captivity? The purpoſe of my incurſions is to encreaſe my riches, or more properly to gather tribute. The ſons of Iſhmael are the natural and hereditary lords of this part of the continent, which is uſurped by late invaders, and low-born tyrants, from whom we are compelled to take by the ſword what

is

is denied to juſtice. The violence of war admits no diſtinction; the lance that is lifted at guilt and power will ſometimes fall on innocence and gentleneſs."

"How little, ſaid I, did I expect that yeſterday it ſhould have fallen upon me!"

"Misfortunes, anſwered the Arab, ſhould always be expected. If the eye of hoſtility could learn reverence or pity, excellence like yours had been exempt from injury. But the angels of affliction ſpread their toils alike for the virtuous and the wicked, for the mighty and the mean. Do not be diſconſolate; I am not one of the lawleſs and cruel rovers of the deſart; I know the rules of civil life: I will fix your ranſome, give a paſ-

port

port to your meſſenger, and perform my ſtipulation with nice punctuality."

"You will eaſily believe that I was pleaſed with his courteſy; and finding that his predominant paſſion was deſire of money, I began now to think my danger leſs, for I knew that no ſum would be thought too great for the releaſe of Pekuah. I told him that he ſhould have no reaſon to charge me with ingratitude, if I was uſed with kindneſs, and that any ranſome, which could be expected for a maid of common rank, would be paid, but that he muſt not perſiſt to rate me as a princeſs. He ſaid, he would conſider what he ſhould demand, and then, ſmiling, bowed and retired.

" Soon after the women came about me, each contending to be more officious than the other, and my maids themſelves were ſerved with reverence. We travelled onward by ſhort journeys. On the fourth day the chief told me, that my ranſome muſt be two hundred ounces of gold, which I not only promiſed him, but told him, that I would add fifty more, if I and my maids were honourably treated.

" I never knew the power of gold before. From that time I was the leader of the troop. The march of every day was longer or ſhorter as I commanded, and the tents were pitched where I choſe to reſt. We now had camels and other conveniencies for travel, my own women were always at my ſide, and I amuſed

my-

myſelf with obſerving the manners of the vagrant nations, and with viewing remains of ancient edifices with which theſe deſerted countries appear to have been, in ſome diſtant age, laviſhly embelliſhed.

" The chief of the band was a man far from illiterate: he was able to travel by the ſtars or the compaſs, and had marked in his erratick expeditions ſuch places as are moſt worthy the notice of a paſſenger. He obſerved to me, that buildings are always beſt preſerved in places little frequented, and difficult of acceſs: for, when once a country declines from its primitive ſplendour, the more inhabitants are left, the quicker ruin will be made. Walls ſupply ſtones more eaſily than quarries, and palaces

and temples will be demoliſhed to make ſtables of granate, and cottages of porphyry.

CHAP. XXXIX.

The adventures of Pekuah continued.

"WE wandered about in this manner for ſome weeks, whether, as our chief pretended, for my gratification, or, as I rather ſuſpected, for ſome convenience of his own. I endeavoured to appear contented where ſullenneſs and reſentment would have been of no uſe, and that endeavour conduced much to the calmneſs of my mind; but my heart was always with Nekayah, and

and the troubles of the night much overbalanced the amuſements of the day. My women, who threw all their cares upon their miſtreſs, ſet their minds at eaſe from the time when they ſaw me treated with reſpect, and gave themſelves up to the incidental alleviations of our fatigue without ſolicitude or ſorrow. I was pleaſed with their pleaſure, and animated with their confidence. My condition had loſt much of its terrour, ſince I found that the Arab ranged the country merely to get riches. Avarice is an uniform and tractable vice: other intellectual diſtempers are different in different conſtitutions of mind; that which ſooths the pride of one will offend the pride of another; but to the favour of the covetous there is a ready way, bring money and nothing is denied.

"At laſt we came to the dwelling of our chief, a ſtrong and ſpacious houſe built with ſtone in an iſland of the Nile, which lies, as I was told under the tropick. "Lady, ſaid the Arab, you ſhall reſt after your journey a few weeks in this place, where you are to conſider yourſelf as ſovereign. My occupation is war: I have therefore choſen this obſcure reſidence, from which I can iſſue unexpected, and to which I can retire unperſued. You may now repoſe in ſecurity: here are few pleaſures, but here is no danger." He then led me into the inner apartments, and ſeating me on the richeſt couch, bowed to the ground. His women, who conſidered me as a rival, looked on me with malignity; but being ſoon informed that I was a great lady detained only for my ranſome, they

they began to vie with each other in obſequiouſneſs and reverence.

" Being again comforted with new aſſurances of ſpeedy liberty, I was for ſome days diverted from impatience by the novelty of the place. The turrets overlooked the country to a great diſtance, and afforded a view of many windings of the ſtream. In the day I wandered from one place to another as the courſe of the ſun varied the ſplendour of the proſpect, and ſaw many things which I had never ſeen before. The crocodiles and river-horſes are common in this unpeopled region, and I often looked upon them with terrour, though I knew that they could not hurt me. For ſome time I expected to ſee mermaids and tritons, which, as Imlac has told

me, the European travellers have ſtationed in the Nile, but no ſuch beings ever appeared, and the Arab, when I enquired after them, laughed at my credulity.

"At night the Arab always attended me to a tower ſet apart for celeſtial obſervations, where he endeavoured to teach me the names and courſes of the ſtars. I had no great inclination to this ſtudy, but an appearance of attention was neceſſary to pleaſe my inſtructor, who valued himſelf for his ſkill, and, in a little while, I found ſome employment requiſite to beguile the tedioufneſs of time, which was to be paſſed always amidſt the ſame objects. I was weary of looking in the morning on things from which I had turned away weary in the evening: I there-

therefore was at laſt willing to obſerve the ſtars rather than do nothing, but could not always compoſe my thoughts, and was very often thinking on Nekayah when others imagined me contemplating the ſky. Soon after the Arab went upon another expedition, and then my only pleaſure was to talk with my maids about the accident by which we were carried away, and the happineſs that we ſhould all enjoy at the end of our captivity."

"There were women in your Arab's fortreſs, ſaid the princeſs, why did you not make them your companions, enjoy their converſation, and partake their diverſions? In a place where they found buſineſs or amuſement, why ſhould you alone ſit corroded with idle melancholy?

or

or why could not you bear for a few months that condition to which they were condemned for life?"

"The diverſions of the women, anſwered Pekuah, were only childiſh play, by which the mind accuſtomed to ſtronger operations could not be kept buſy. I could do all which they delighted in doing by powers merely ſenſitive, while my intellectual faculties were flown to Cairo. They ran from room to room as a bird hops from wire to wire in his cage. They danced for the ſake of motion, as lambs friſk in a meadow. One ſometimes pretended to be hurt that the reſt might be alarmed, or hid herſelf that another might ſeek her. Part of their time paſſed in watching the progreſs of light bodies that floated on the river, and part in-

in marking the various forms into which clouds broke in the ſky.

"Their buſineſs was only needle-work, in which I and my maids ſometimes helped them; but you know that the mind will eaſily ſtraggle from the fingers, nor will you ſuſpect that captivity and abſence from Nekayah could receive ſolace from ſilken flowers.

"Nor was much ſatisfaction to be hoped from their converſation: for of what could they be expected to talk? They had ſeen nothing; for they had lived from early youth in that narrow ſpot: of what they had not ſeen they could have no knowledge, for they could not read. They had no ideas but of the few things that were within their view, and

and had hardly names for any thing but their cloaths and their food. As I bore a ſuperiour character, I was often called to terminate their quarrels, which I decided as equitably as I could. If it could have amuſed me to hear the complaints of each againſt the reſt, I might have been often detained by long ſtories, but the motives of their animoſity were ſo ſmall that I could not liſten without intercepting the tale."

"How, ſaid Raſſelas, can the Arab, whom you repreſented as a man of more than common accompliſhments, take any pleaſure in his ſeraglio when it is filled only with women like theſe. Are they exquiſitely beautiful?"

"They

"They do not, ſaid Pekuah, want that unaffecting and ignoble beauty which may ſubſiſt without ſpritelineſs or ſublimity, without energy of thought or dignity of virtue. But to a man like the Arab ſuch beauty was only a flower caſually plucked and careleſly thrown away. Whatever pleaſures he might find among them, they were not thoſe of friendſhip or ſociety. When they were playing about him he looked on them with inattentive ſuperiority: when they vied for his regard he ſometimes turned away diſguſted. As they had no knowledge, their talk could take nothing from the tediouſneſs of life: as they had no choice, their fondneſs, or appearance of fondneſs, excited in him neither pride nor gratitude; he was not exalted in his own eſteem by the ſmiles of a woman

who

who ſaw no other man, nor was much obliged by that regard, of which he could never know the ſincerity, and which he might often perceive to be exerted not ſo much to delight him as to pain a rival. That which he gave, and they received, as love, was only a careleſs diſtribution of ſuperfluous time, ſuch love as man can beſtow upon that which he deſpiſes, ſuch as has neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor ſorrow."

"You have reaſon, lady, to think yourſelf happy, ſaid Imlac, that you have been thus eaſily diſmiſſed. How could a mind, hungry for knowledge, be willing, in an intellectual famine, to loſe ſuch a banquet as Pekuah's converſation?"

"I

"I am inclined to believe, anſwered Pekuah, that he was for ſome time in ſuſpenſe; for, notwithſtanding his promiſe, whenever I propoſed to diſpatch a meſſenger to Cairo, he found ſome excuſe for delay. While I was detained in his houſe he made many incurſions into the neighbouring countries, and, perhaps, he would have refuſed to diſcharge me, had his plunder been equal to his wiſhes. He returned always courteous, related his adventures, delighted to hear my obſervations, and endeavoured to advance my acquaintance with the ſtars. When I importuned him to ſend away my letters, he ſoothed me with profeſſions of honour and ſincerity; and, when I could be no longer decently denied, put his troop again in motion, and left me to govern in his abſence. I was much afflicted by this

this ſtudied procraſtination, and was ſometimes afraid that I ſhould be forgotten; that you would leave Cairo, and I muſt end my days in an iſland of the Nile.

"I grew at laſt hopeleſs and dejected, and cared ſo little to entertain him, that he for a while more frequently talked with my maids. That he ſhould fall in love with them, or with me, might have been equally fatal, and I was not much pleaſed with the growing friendſhip. My anxiety was not long; for, as I recovered ſome degree of chearfulneſs, he returned to me, and I could not forbear to deſpiſe my former uneaſineſs.

"He ſtill delayed to ſend for my ranſome, and would, perhaps, never have determined, had not your agent found his

his way to him. The gold, which he would not fetch, he could not reject when it was offered. He haſtened to prepare for our journey hither, like a man delivered from the pain of an inteſtine conflict. I took leave of my companions in the houſe, who diſmiſſed me with cold indifference."

Nekayah, having heard her favourite's relation, roſe and embraced her, and Raſſelas gave her an hundred ounces of gold, which ſhe preſented to the Arab for the fifty that were promiſed.

CHAP. XLIV.

The hiſtory of a man of learning.

THEY returned to Cairo, and were ſo well pleaſed at finding themſelves together, that none of them went much abroad. The prince began to love learning, and one day declared to Imlac, that he intended to devote himſelf to ſcience, and paſs the reſt of his days in literary ſolitude.

"Before you make your final choice, anſwered Imlac, you ought to examine its hazards, and converſe with ſome of thoſe who are grown old in the company of themſelves. I have juſt left

the obſervatory of one of the moſt learned aſtronomers in the world, who has ſpent forty years in unwearied attention to the motions and appearances of the celeſtial bodies, and has drawn out his ſoul in endleſs calculations. He admits a few friends once a month to hear his deductions and enjoy his diſcoveries. I was introduced as a man of knowledge worthy of his notice. Men of various ideas and fluent converſation are commonly welcome to thoſe whoſe thoughts have been long fixed upon a ſingle point, and who find the images of other things ſtealing away. I delighted him with my remarks, he ſmiled at the narrative of my travels, and was glad to forget the conſtellations, and deſcend for a moment into the lower world.

"On the next day of vacation I renewed my viſit, and was ſo fortunate as to pleaſe him again. He relaxed from that time the ſeverity of his rule, and permitted me to enter at my own choice. I found him always buſy, and always glad to be relieved. As each knew much which the other was deſirous of learning, we exchanged our notions with great delight. I perceived that I had every day more of his confidence, and always found new cauſe of admiration in the profundity of his mind. His comprehenſion is vaſt, his memory capacious and retentive, his diſcourſe is methodical, and his expreſſion clear.

"His integrity and benevolence are equal to his learning. His deepeſt reſearches

ſearches and moſt favourite ſtudies are willingly interrupted for any opportunity of doing good by his counſel or his riches. To his cloſeſt retreat, at his moſt buſy moments, all are admitted that want his aſſiſtance: "For though I exclude idleneſs and pleaſure, I will never, ſays he, bar my doors againſt charity. To man is permitted the contemplation of the ſkies, but the practice of virtue is commanded."

"Surely, ſaid the princeſs, this man is happy."

"I viſited him, ſaid Imlac, with more and more frequency, and was every time more enamoured of his converſation: he was ſublime without haughtineſs, courteous without formality, and

communicative without oſtentation. I was at firſt, great princeſs, of your opinion, thought him the happieſt of mankind, and often congratulated him on the bleſſing that he enjoyed. He ſeemed to hear nothing with indifference but the praiſes of his condition, to which he always returned a general anſwer, and diverted the converſation to ſome other topick.

"Amidſt this willingneſs to be pleaſed, and labour to pleaſe, I had quickly reaſon to imagine that ſome painful ſentiment preſſed upon his mind. He often looked up earneſtly towards the ſun, and let his voice fall in the midſt of his diſcourſe. He would ſometimes, when we were alone, gaze upon me in ſilence with the air of a man who longed

longed to ſpeak what he was yet reſolved to ſuppreſs. He would often ſend for me with vehement injunctions of haſte, though, when I came to him, he had nothing extraordinary to ſay. And ſometimes, when I was leaving him, would call me back, pauſe a few moments, and then diſmiſs me.

CHAP. XLI.

The aſtronomer diſcovers the cauſe of his uneaſineſs.

AT laſt the time came when the ſecret burſt his reſerve. We were ſitting together laſt night in the turret of his houſe, watching the emerſion of a ſatellite of Jupiter. A ſudden tempeſt clouded the ſky, and diſappointed our obſervation. We ſat a while ſilent in the dark, and then he addreſſed himſelf to me in theſe words: "Imlac, I have long conſidered thy friendſhip as the greateſt bleſſing of my life. Integrity without knowledge is weak and uſeleſs, and knowledge without integrity

is

is dangerous and dreadful. I have found in thee all the qualities requiſite for truſt, benevolence, experience, and fortitude. I have long diſcharged an office which I muſt ſoon quit at the call of nature, and ſhall rejoice in the hour of imbecility and pain to devolve it upon thee."

"I thought myſelf honoured by this teſtimony, and proteſted that whatever could conduce to his happineſs would add likewiſe to mine."

"Hear, Imlac, what thou wilt not without difficulty credit. I have poſſeſſed for five years the regulation of weather, and the diſtribution of the ſeaſons: the ſun has liſtened to my dictates, and paſſed from tropick to tropick by my direction; the clouds, at my

my call, have poured their waters, and the Nile has overflowed at my command; I have reſtrained the rage of the dog-ſtar, and mitigated the fervours of the crab. The winds alone, of all the elemental powers, have hitherto refuſed my authority, and multitudes have periſhed by equinoctial tempeſts which I found myſelf unable to prohibit or reſtrain. I have adminiſtered this great office with exact juſtice, and made to the different nations of the earth an impartial dividend of rain and ſunſhine. What muſt have been the miſery of half the globe, if I had limited the clouds to particular regions, or confined the ſun to either ſide of the equator?"

CHAP.

CHAP. XLII.

The opinion of the aſtronomer is explained and juſtified.

"I Suppoſe he diſcovered in me, through the obſcurity of the room, ſome tokens of amazement and doubt; for, after a ſhort pauſe, he proceeded thus:"

"Not to be eaſily credited will neither ſurpriſe nor offend me; for I am, probably, the firſt of human beings to whom this truſt has been imparted. Nor do I know whether to deem this diſtinction a reward or puniſhment; ſince I have poſſeſſed it I have been far leſs happy

py than before, and nothing but the conſciouſneſs of good intention could have enabled me to ſupport the wearineſs of unremitted vigilance."

"How long, Sir, ſaid I, has this great office been in your hands?"

"About ten years ago, ſaid he, my daily obſervations of the changes of the ſky led me to conſider, whether, if I had the power of the ſeaſons, I could confer greater plenty upon the inhabitants of the earth. This contemplation faſtened on my mind, and I ſat days and nights in imaginary dominion, pouring upon this country and that the ſhowers of fertility, and ſeconding every fall of rain with a due proportion of ſunſhine. I had yet only the will to do

good,

good, and did not imagine that I ſhould ever have the power.

" One day as I was looking on the fields withering with heat, I felt in my mind a ſudden wiſh that I could ſend rain on the ſouthern mountains, and raiſe the Nile to an inundation. In the hurry of my imagination I commanded rain to fall, and, by comparing the time of my command, with that of the inundation, I found that the clouds had liſtened to my lips."

" Might not ſome other cauſe, ſaid I, produce this concurrence? the Nile does not always riſe on the ſame day."

" Do not believe, ſaid he with impatience, that ſuch objections could eſcape me:

me: I reaſoned long againſt my own conviction, and laboured againſt truth with the utmoſt obſtinacy. I ſometimes ſuſpected myſelf of madneſs, and ſhould not have dared to impart this ſecret but to a man like you, capable of diſtinguiſhing the wonderful from the impoſſible, and the incredible from the falſe."

"Why, Sir, ſaid I, do you call that incredible, which you know, or think you know, to be true?"

"Becauſe, ſaid he, I cannot prove it by any external evidence; and I know too well the laws of demonſtration to think that my conviction ought to influence another, who cannot, like me, be conſcious of its force. I, therefore, ſhall not

not attempt to gain credit by diſputation. It is ſufficient that I feel this power, that I have long poſſeſſed, and every day exerted it. But the life of man is ſhort, the infirmities of age increaſe upon me, and the time will ſoon come when the regulator of the year muſt mingle with the duſt. The care of appointing a ſucceſſor has long diſturbed me; the night and the day have been ſpent in compariſons of all the characters which have come to my knowledge, and I have yet found none ſo worthy as thyſelf."

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIII.

The Aſtronomer leaves Imlac his directions.

"HEAR therefore, what I ſhall impart, with attention, ſuch as the welfare of a world requires. If the taſk of a king be conſidered as difficult, who has the care only of a few millions, to whom he cannot do much good or harm, what muſt be the anxiety of him, on whom depends the action of the elements, and the great gifts of light and heat!—Hear me therefore with attention.

"I have diligently conſidered the poſition of the earth and ſun, and formed in-

innumerable ſchemes in which I changed their ſituation. I have ſometimes turned aſide the axis of the earth, and ſometimes varied the ecliptick of the ſun: but I have found it impoſſible to make a diſpoſition by which the world may be advantaged; what one region gains, another loſes by any imaginable alteration, even without conſidering the diſtant parts of the ſolar ſyſtem with which we are unacquainted. Do not, therefore, in thy adminiſtration of the year, indulge thy pride by innovation; do not pleaſe thyſelf with thinking that thou canſt make thyſelf renowned to all future ages, by diſordering the ſeaſons. The memory of miſchief is no deſirable fame. Much leſs will it become thee to let kindneſs or intereſt prevail. Never rob other

countries of rain to pour it on thine own. For us the Nile is ſufficient."

"I promiſed that when I poſſeſſed the power, I would uſe it with inflexible integrity, and he diſmiſſed me, preſſing my hand. "My heart, ſaid he, will be now at reſt, and my benevolence will no more deſtroy my quiet: I have found a man of wiſdom and virtue, to whom I can chearfully bequeath the inheritance of the ſun."

The prince heard this narration with very ſerious regard, but the princeſs ſmiled, and Pekuah convulſed herſelf with laughter. "Ladies, ſaid Imlac, to mock the heavieſt of human afflictions is neither charitable nor wiſe. Few can attain this man's knowledge,

and few practiſe his virtues; but all may ſuffer his calamity. Of the uncertainties of our preſent ſtate, the moſt dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reaſon."

The princeſs was recollected, and the favourite was abaſhed. Raſſelas, more deeply affected, enquired of Imlac, whether he thought ſuch maladies of the mind frequent, and how they were contracted.

CHAP. XLIV.

The dangerous prevalence of imagination.

"DISORDERS of intellect, anſwered Imlac, happen much more often than ſuperficial obſervers will eaſily believe. Perhaps, if we ſpeak with rigorous exactneſs, no human mind is in its right ſtate. There is no man whoſe imagination does not ſometimes predominate over his reaſon, who can regulate his attention wholly by his will, and whoſe ideas will come and go at his command. No man will be found in whoſe mind airy notions do not ſometimes tyranniſe, and force him to hope or fear beyond

yond the limits of ſober probability. All power of fancy over reaſon is a degree of inſanity; but while this power is ſuch as we can controul and repreſs, it is not viſible to others, nor conſidered as any depravation of the mental faculties: it is not pronounced madneſs but when it comes ungovernable, and apparently influences ſpeech or action.

"To indulge the power of fiction, and ſend imagination out upon the wing, is often the ſport of thoſe who delight too much in ſilent ſpeculation. When we are alone we are not always buſy; the labour of excogitation is too violent to laſt long; the ardour of enquiry will ſometimes give way to idleneſs or ſatiety. He who has nothing external that can divert him, muſt find pleaſure in his

own thoughts, and muſt conceive himſelf what he is not; for who is pleaſed with what he is? He then expatiates in boundleſs futurity, and culls from all imaginable conditions that which for the preſent moment he ſhould moſt deſire, amuſes his deſires with impoſſible enjoyments, and confers upon his pride unattainable dominion. The mind dances from ſcene to ſcene, unites all pleaſures in all combinations, and riots in delights which nature and fortune, with all their bounty, cannot beſtow.

"In time ſome particular train of ideas fixes the attention, all other intellectual gratifications are rejected, the mind, in wearineſs or leiſure, recurs conſtantly to the favourite conception, and feaſts on the luſcious falſehood whenever ſhe

ſhe is offended with the bitterneſs of truth. By degrees the reign of fancy is confirmed; ſhe grows firſt imperious, and in time deſpotick. Then fictions begin to operate as realities, falſe opinions faſten upon the mind, and life paſſes in dreams of rapture or of anguiſh.

"This, Sir, is one of the dangers of ſolitude, which the hermit has confeſſed not always to promote goodneſs, and the aſtronomer's miſery has proved to be not always propitious to wiſdom."

"I will no more, ſaid the favourite, imagine myſelf the queen of Abiſſinia. I have often ſpent the hours, which the princeſs gave to my own diſpoſal, in adjuſting ceremonies and regulating the court; I have repreſſed the pride of the

powerful, and granted the petitions of the poor; I have built new palaces in more happy ſituations, planted groves upon the tops of mountains, and have exulted in the beneficence of royalty, till, when the princeſs entered, I had almoſt forgotten to bow down before her."

"And I, ſaid the princeſs, will not allow myſelf any more to play the ſhepherdeſs in my waking dreams. I have often ſoothed my thoughts with the quiet and innocence of paſtoral employments, till I have in my chamber heard the winds whiſtle, and the ſheep bleat; ſometimes freed the lamb entangled in the thicket, and ſometimes with my crook encountered the wolf. I have a dreſs like that of the village maids, which I put on to help my imagination, and a pipe on which

which I play ſoftly, and ſuppoſe myſelf followed by my flocks."

"I will confeſs, ſaid the prince, an indulgence of fantaſtick delight more dangerous than yours. I have frequently endeavoured to image the poſſibility of a perfect government, by which all wrong ſhould be reſtrained, all vice reformed, and all the ſubjects preſerved in tranquility and innocence. This thought produced innumerable ſchemes of reformation, and dictated many uſeful regulations and ſalutary edicts. This has been the ſport and ſometimes the labour of my ſolitude; and I ſtart, when I think with how little anguiſh I once ſuppoſed the death of my father and my brothers."

"Such

"Such, ſays Imlac, are the effects of viſionary ſchemes: when we firſt form them we know them to be abſurd, but familiariſe them by degrees, and in time loſe ſight of their folly."

CHAP. XLV.

They diſcourſe with an old man.

THE evening was now far paſt, and they roſe to return home. As they walked along the bank of the Nile, delighted with the beams of the moon quivering on the water, they ſaw at a ſmall diſtance an old man, whom the prince had often heard in the aſſembly of the ſages. "Yonder, ſaid he, is one whoſe years have calmed his paſſions, but

but not clouded his reaſon: let us cloſe the diſquiſitions of the night, by enquiring what are his ſentiments of his own ſtate, that we may know whether youth alone is to ſtruggle with vexation, and whether any better hope remains for the latter part of life."

Here the ſage approached and ſaluted them. They invited him to join their walk, and prattled a while as acquaintance that had unexpectedly met one another. The old man was chearful and talkative, and the way ſeemed ſhort in his company. He was pleaſed to find himſelf not diſregarded, accompanied them to their houſe, and, at the prince's requeſt, entered with them. They placed him in the ſeat of honour, and ſet wine and conſerves before him.

"Sir,

"Sir, ſaid the princeſs, an evening walk muſt give to a man of learning, like you, pleaſures which ignorance and youth can hardly conceive. You know the qualities and the cauſes of all that you behold, the laws by which the river flows, the periods in which the planets perform their revolutions. Every thing muſt ſupply you with contemplation, and renew the conſciouſneſs of your own dignity."

"Lady, anſwered he, let the gay and the vigorous expect pleaſure in their excurſions, it is enough that age can obtain eaſe. To me the world has loſt its novelty: I look round, and ſee what I remember to have ſeen in happier days. I reſt againſt a tree, and conſider, that in the ſame ſhade I once diſputed upon the

the annual overflow of the Nile with a friend who is now ſilent in the grave. I caſt my eyes upwards, fix them on the changing moon, and think with pain on the viciſſitudes of life. I have ceaſed to take much delight in phyſical truth; for what have I to do with thoſe things which I am ſoon to leave?"

"You may at leaſt recreate yourſelf, ſaid Imlac, with the recollection of an honourable and uſeful life, and enjoy the praiſe which all agree to give you."

"Praiſe, ſaid the ſage, with a ſigh, is to an old man an empty ſound. I have neither mother to be delighted with the reputation of her ſon, nor wife to partake the honours of her huſband. I have outlived my friends and my rivals.

No-

Nothing is now of much importance; for I cannot extend my intereſt beyond myſelf. Youth is delighted with applauſe, becauſe it is conſidered as the earneſt of ſome future good, and becauſe the proſpect of life is far extended: but to me, who am now declining to decrepitude, there is little to be feared from the malevolence of men, and yet leſs to be hoped from their affection or eſteem. Something they may yet take away, but they can give me nothing. Riches would now be uſeleſs, and high employment would be pain. My retroſpect of life recalls to my view many opportunities of good neglected, much time ſquandered upon trifles, and more loſt in idleneſs and vacancy. I leave many great deſigns unattempted, and many great attempts unfiniſhed. My mind is burthened

thened with no heavy crime, and therefore I compoſe myſelf to tranquility; endeavour to abſtract my thoughts from hopes and cares, which, though reaſon knows them to be vain, ſtill try to keep their old poſſeſſion of the heart; expect, with ſerene humility, that hour which nature cannot long delay; and hope to poſſeſs in a better ſtate that happineſs which here I could not find, and that virtue which here I have not attained."

He roſe and went away, leaving his audience not much elated with the hope of long life. The prince conſoled himſelf with remarking, that it was not reaſonable to be diſappointed by this account; for age had never been conſidered as the ſeaſon of felicity, and, if it was poſſible to be eaſy in decline and weakneſs,

neſs, it was likely that the days of vigour and alacrity might be happy: that the noon of life might be bright, if the evening could be calm.

The princeſs ſuſpected that age was querulous and malignant, and delighted to repreſs the expectations of thoſe who had newly entered the world. She had ſeen the poſſeſſors of eſtates look with envy on their heirs, and known many who enjoy pleaſure no longer than they can confine it to themſelves.

Pekuah conjectured, that the man was older than he appeared, and was willing to impute his complaints to delirious dejection; or elſe ſuppoſed that he had been unfortunate, and was therefore diſcontented: "For nothing, ſaid ſhe,

ſhe, is more common than to call our own condition, the condition of life."

Imlac, who had no deſire to ſee them depreſſed, ſmiled at the comforts which they could ſo readily procure to themſelves, and remembered, that at the ſame age, he was equally confident of unmingled proſperity, and equally fertile of conſolatory expedients. He forbore to force upon them unwelcome knowledge, which time itſelf would too ſoon impreſs. The princeſs and her lady retired; the madneſs of the aſtronomer hung upon their minds, and they deſired Imlac to enter upon his office, and delay next morning the riſing of the ſun.

CHAP. XLVI.

The princeſs and Pekuah viſit the aſtronomer.

THE princeſs and Pekuah having talked in private of Imlac's aſtronomer, thought his character at once ſo amiable and ſo ſtrange, that they could not be ſatisfied without a nearer knowledge, and Imlac was requeſted to find the means of bringing them together.

This was ſomewhat difficult; the philoſopher had never received any viſits from women, though he lived in a city that had in it many Europeans who followed the manners of their own countries,

tries, and many from other parts of the world that lived there with European liberty. The ladies would not be refuſed, and ſeveral ſchemes were propoſed for the accompliſhment of their deſign. It was propoſed to introduce them as ſtrangers in diſtreſs, to whom the ſage was always acceſſible; but, after ſome deliberation, it appeared, that by this artifice, no acquaintance could be formed, for their converſation would be ſhort, and they could not decently importune him often. "This, ſaid Raſſelas, is true; but I have yet a ſtronger objection againſt the miſrepreſentation of your ſtate. I have always conſidered it as treaſon againſt the great republick of human nature, to make any man's virtues the means of deceiving him, whether on great or little occaſions. All impoſture

weakens confidence and chills benevolence. When the ſage finds that you are not what you ſeemed, he will feel the reſentment natural to a man who, conſcious of great abilities, diſcovers that he has been tricked by underſtandings meaner than his own, and, perhaps, the diſtruſt, which he can never afterwards wholly lay aſide, may ſtop the voice of counſel, and cloſe the hand of charity; and where will you find the power of reſtoring his benefactions to mankind, or his peace to himſelf?"

To this no reply was attempted, and Imlac began to hope that their curioſity would ſubſide; but, next day, Pekuah told him, ſhe had now found an honeſt pretence for a viſit to the aſtronomer, for ſhe would ſolicite permiſſion to continue

tute under him the ſtudies in which ſhe had been initiated by the Arab, and the princeſs might go with her either as a fellow-ſtudent, or becauſe a woman could not decently come alone. "I am afraid, ſaid Imlac, that he will be ſoon weary of your company: men advanced far in knowledge do not love to repeat the elements of their art, and I am not certain that even of the elements, as he will deliver them connected with inferences, and mingled with reflections, you are a very capable auditreſs." "That, ſaid Pekuah, muſt be my care: I aſk of you only to take me thither. My knowledge is, perhaps, more than you imagine it, and by concurring always with his opinions I ſhall make him think it greater than it is."

The aſtronomer, in purſuance of this reſolution, was told, that a foreign lady, travelling in ſearch of knowledge, had heard of his reputation, and was deſirous to become his ſcholar. The uncommonneſs of the propoſal raiſed at once his ſurprize and curioſity, and when, after a ſhort deliberation, he conſented to admit her, he could not ſtay without impatience till the next day.

The ladies dreſſed themſelves magnificently, and were attended by Imlac to the aſtronomer, who was pleaſed to ſee himſelf approached with reſpect by perſons of ſo ſplendid an appearance. In the exchange of the firſt civilities he was timorous and baſhful; but when the talk became regular, he recollected his powers, and juſtified the character which Im-

Imlac had given. Enquiring of Pekuah what could have turned her inclination towards aſtronomy, he received from her a hiſtory of her adventure at the pyramid, and of the time paſſed in the Arab's iſland. She told her tale with eaſe and elegance, and her converſation took poſſeſſion of his heart. The diſcourſe was then turned to aſtronomy: Pekuah diſplayed what ſhe knew: he looked upon her as a prodigy of genius, and intreated her not to deſiſt from a ſtudy which ſhe had ſo happily begun.

They came again and again, and were every time more welcome than before. The ſage endeavoured to amuſe them, that they might prolong their viſits, for he found his thoughts grow brighter in their company; the clouds of ſolicitude

vaniſhed by degrees, as he forced himſelf to entertain them, and he grieved when he was left at their departure to his old employment of regulating the ſeaſons.

The princeſs and her favourite had now watched his lips for ſeveral months, and could not catch a ſingle word from which they could judge whether he continued, or not, in the opinion of his preternatural commiſſion. They often contrived to bring him to an open declaration, but he eaſily eluded all their attacks, and on which ſide ſoever they preſſed him eſcaped from them to ſome other topick.

As their familiarity increaſed they invited him often to the houſe of Imlac, where they diſtinguiſhed him by extraordinary

ordinary reſpect. He began gradually to delight in ſublunary pleaſures. He came early and departed late; laboured to recommend himſelf by aſſiduity and compliance; excited their curioſity after new arts, that they might ſtill want his aſſiſtance; and when they made any excurſion of pleaſure or enquiry, entreated to attend them.

By long experience of his integrity and wiſdom, the prince and his ſiſter were convinced that he might be truſted without danger; and leſt he ſhould draw any falſe hopes from the civilities which he received, diſcovered to him their condition, with the motives of their journey, and required his opinion on the choice of life.

"Of

"Of the various conditions which the world ſpreads before you, which you ſhall prefer, ſaid the ſage, I am not able to inſtruct you. I can only tell that I have choſen wrong. I have paſſed my time in ſtudy without experience; in the attainment of ſciences which can, for the moſt part, be but remotely uſeful to mankind. I have purchaſed knowledge at the expence of all the common comforts of life: I have miſſed the endearing elegance of female friendſhip, and the happy commerce of domeſtick tenderneſs. If I have obtained any prerogatives above other ſtudents, they have been accompanied with fear, diſquiet, and ſcrupuloſity; but even of theſe prerogatives, whatever they were, I have, ſince my thoughts have been diverſified by more intercourſe with the world, be-

gun to queſtion the reality. When I have been for a few days loſt in pleaſing diſſipation, I am always tempted to think that my enquiries have ended in errour, and that I have ſuffered much, and ſuffered it in vain."

Imlac was delighted to find that the ſage's underſtanding was breaking through its miſts, and reſolved to detain him from the planets till he ſhould forget his taſk of ruling them, and reaſon ſhould recover its original influence.

From this time the aſtronomer was received into familiar friendſhip, and partook of all their projects and pleaſures: his reſpect kept him attentive, and the activity of Raſſelas did not leave much time unengaged. Something was always

ways to be done; the day was ſpent in making obſervations which furniſhed talk for the evening, and the evening was cloſed with a ſcheme for the morrow.

The ſage confeſſed to Imlac, that ſince he had mingled in the gay tumults of life, and divided his hours by a ſucceſſion of amuſements, he found the conviction of his authority over the ſkies fade gradually from his mind, and began to truſt leſs to an opinion which he never could prove to others, and which he now found ſubject to variation from cauſes in which reaſon had no part. "If I am accidentally left alone for a few hours, ſaid he, my inveterate perſuaſion ruſhes upon my ſoul, and my thoughts are chained down by ſome irreſiſtible vio-

violence, but they are ſoon diſentangled by the prince's converſation, and inſtantaneouſly releaſed at the entrance of Pekuah. I am like a man habitually afraid of ſpectres, who is ſet at eaſe by a lamp, and wonders at the dread which harraſſed him in the dark, yet, if his lamp be extinguiſhed, feels again the terrours which he knows that when it is light he ſhall feel no more. But I am ſometimes afraid leſt I indulge my quiet by criminal negligence, and voluntarily forget the great charge with which I am intruſted. If I favour myſelf in a known errour, or am determined by my own eaſe in a doubtful queſtion of this importance, how dreadful is my crime!"

No diſeaſe of the imagination, anſwered Imlac, is ſo difficult of cure, as

that

that which is complicated with the dread of guilt: fancy and conſcience then act interchangeably upon us, and ſo often ſhift their places, that the illuſions of one are not diſtinguiſhed from the dictates of the other. If fancy preſents images not moral or religious, the mind drives them away when they give it pain, but when melancholick notions take the form of duty, they lay hold on the faculties without oppoſition, becauſe we are afraid to exclude or baniſh them. For this reaſon the ſuperſtitious are often melancholy, and the melancholy almoſt always ſuperſtitious.

"But do not let the ſuggeſtions of timidity overpower your better reaſon: the danger of neglect can be but as the probability of the obligation, which when

when you conſider it with freedom, you find very little, and that little growing every day leſs. Open your heart to the influence of the light, which, from time to time, breaks in upon you: when ſcruples importune you, which you in your lucid moments know to be vain, do not ſtand to parley, but fly to buſineſs or to Pekuah, and keep this thought always prevalent, that you are only one atom of the maſs of humanity, and have neither ſuch virtue nor vice, as that you ſhould be ſingled out for ſupernatural favours or afflictions."

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVII.

The prince enters and brings a new topick.

"ALL this, ſaid the aſtronomer, I have often thought, but my reaſon has been ſo long ſubjugated by an uncontrolable and overwhelming idea, that it durſt not confide in its own deciſions. I now ſee how fatally I betrayed my quiet, by ſuffering chimeras to prey upon me in ſecret; but melancholy ſhrinks from communication, and I never found a man before, to whom I could impart my troubles, though I had been certain of relief. I rejoice to find my own ſentiments confirmed by yours, who

who are not eaſily deceived, and can have no motive or purpoſe to deceive. I hope that time and variety will diſſipate the gloom that has ſo long ſurrounded me, and the latter part of my days will be ſpent in peace."

"Your learning and virtue, ſaid Imlac, may juſtly give you hopes."

Raſſelas then entered with the princeſs and Pekuah, and enquired whether they had contrived any new diverſion for the next day. "Such, ſaid Nekayah, is the ſtate of life, that none are happy but by the anticipation of change: the change itſelf is nothing; when we have made it, the next wiſh is to change again. The world is not yet exhauſted;

let me ſee ſomething to morrow which I never ſaw before."

"Variety, ſaid Raſſelas, is ſo neceſſary to content, that even the happy valley diſguſted me by the recurrence of its luxuries; yet I could not forbear to reproach myſelf with impatience, when I ſaw the monks of St. Anthony ſupport without complaint, a life, not of uniform delight, but uniform hardſhip."

"Thoſe men, anſwered Imlac, are leſs wretched in their ſilent convent than the Abiſſinian princes in their priſon of pleaſure. Whatever is done by the monks is incited by an adequate and reaſonable motive. Their labour ſupplies them with neceſſaries; it therefore cannot be omitted, and is certainly rewarded.

Their

Their devotion prepares them for another ſtate, and reminds them of its approach, while it fits them for it. Their time is regularly diſtributed; one duty ſucceeds another, ſo that they are not left open to the diſtraction of unguided choice, nor loſt in the ſhades of liſtleſs inactivity. There is a certain taſk to be performed at an appropriated hour; and their toils are cheerful, becauſe they conſider them as acts of piety, by which they are always advancing towards endleſs felicity."

"Do you think, ſaid Nekayah, that the monaſtick rule is a more holy and leſs imperfect ſtate than any other? May not he equally hope for future happineſs who converſes openly with mankind, who ſuccours the diſtreſſed by his

charity, inſtructs the ignorant by his learning, and contributes by his induſtry to the general ſyſtem of life; even though he ſhould omit ſome of the mortifications which are practiſed in the cloiſter, and allow himſelf ſuch harmleſs delights as his condition may place within his reach?"

"This, ſaid Imlac, is a queſtion which has long divided the wiſe, and perplexed the good. I am afraid to decide on either part. He that lives well in the world is better than he that lives well in a monaſtery. But, perhaps, every one is not able to ſtem the temptations of publick life; and, if he cannot conquer, he may properly retreat. Some have little power to do good, and have likewiſe little ſtrength to reſiſt evil. Many are weary of their conflicts with adverſity, and are

willing to eject those passions which have long busied them in vain. And many are dismissed by age and diseases from the more laborious duties of society. In monasteries the weak and timorous may be happily sheltered, the weary may repose, and the penitent may meditate. Those retreats of prayer and contemplation have something so congenial to the mind of man, that, perhaps, there is scarcely one that does not purpose to close his life in pious abstraction with a few associates serious as himself."

"Such, said Pekuah, has often been my wish, and I have heard the princess declare, that she should not willingly die in a croud."

"The liberty of uſing harmleſs pleaſures, proceeded Imlac, will not be diſputed; but it is ſtill to be examined what pleaſures are harmleſs. The evil of any pleaſure that Nekayah can image is not in the act itſelf, but in its conſequences. Pleaſure, in itſelf harmleſs, may become miſchievous, by endearing to us a ſtate which we know to be tranſient and probatory, and withdrawing our thoughts from that, of which every hour brings us nearer to the beginning, and of which no length of time will bring us to the end. Mortification is not virtuous in itſelf, nor has any other uſe, but that it diſengages us from the allurements of ſenſe. In the ſtate of future perfection to which we all aſpire, there will be pleaſure without danger, and ſecurity without reſtraint."

The

The princeſs was ſilent, and Raſſelas, turning to the aſtronomer, aſked him, whether he could not delay her retreat, by ſhewing her ſomething which ſhe had not ſeen before.

"Your curioſity, ſaid the ſage, has been ſo general, and your purſuit of knowledge ſo vigorous, that novelties are not now very eaſily to be found: but what you can no longer procure from the living may be given by the dead. Among the wonders of this country are the catacombs, or the ancient repoſitories, in which the bodies of the earlieſt generations were lodged, and where, by the virtue of the gums which embalmed them, they yet remain without corruption."

"I know not, ſaid Raſſelas, what pleaſure the ſight of the catacombs can afford; but, ſince nothing elſe is offered, I am reſolved to view them, and ſhall place this with many other things which I have done, becauſe I would do ſomething."

They hired a guard of horſemen, and the next day viſited the catacombs. When they were about to deſcend into the ſepulchral caves, "Pekuah, ſaid the princeſs, we are now again invading the habitations of the dead; I know that you will ſtay behind; let me find you ſafe when I return." "No, I will not be left, anſwered Pekuah; I will go down between you and the prince."

They

They then all deſcended, and roved with wonder through the labyrinth of ſubterraneous paſſages, where the bodies were laid in rows on either ſide.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Imlac diſcourſes on the nature of the ſoul.

"WHAT reaſon, ſaid the prince, can be given, why the Egyptians ſhould thus expenſively preſerve thoſe carcaſſes which ſome nations conſume with fire, others lay to mingle with the earth, and all agree to remove from their ſight, as ſoon as decent rites can be performed?"

"The

"The original of ancient cuſtoms, ſaid Imlac, is commonly unknown; for the practice often continues when the cauſe has ceaſed; and concerning ſuperſtitious ceremonies it is vain to conjecture; for what reaſon did not dictate reaſon cannot explain. I have long believed that the practice of embalming aroſe only from tenderneſs to the remains of relations or friends, and to this opinion I am more inclined, becauſe it ſeems impoſſible that this care ſhould have been general: had all the dead been embalmed, their repoſitories muſt in time have been more ſpacious than the dwellings of the living. I ſuppoſe only the rich or honourable were ſecured from corruption, and the reſt left to the courſe of nature.

"But

"But it is commonly ſuppoſed that the Egyptians believed the ſoul to live as long as the body continued undiſſolved, and therefore tried this method of eluding death."

"Could the wiſe Egyptians, ſaid Nekayah, think ſo groſly of the ſoul? If the ſoul could once ſurvive its ſeparation, what could it afterwards receive or ſuffer from the body?"

"The Egyptians would doubtleſs think erroneouſly, ſaid the aſtronomer, in the darkneſs of heatheniſm, and the firſt dawn of philoſophy. The nature of the ſoul is ſtill diſputed amidſt all our opportunities of clearer knowledge: ſome yet ſay that it may be material, who, nevertheleſs, believe it to be immortal."

"Some,

"Some, anſwered Imlac, have indeed ſaid that the ſoul is material, but I can ſcarcely believe that any man has thought it, who knew how to think; for all the concluſions of reaſon enforce the immateriality of mind, and all the notices of ſenſe and inveſtigations of ſcience concur to prove the unconſciouſneſs of matter.

"It was never ſuppoſed that cogitation is inherent in matter, or that every particle is a thinking being. Yet, if any part of matter be devoid of thought, what part can we ſuppoſe to think? Matter can differ from matter only in form, denſity, bulk, motion, and direction of motion: to which of theſe, however varied or combined, can conſciouſneſs be annexed? To be round or ſquare, to be

be ſolid or fluid, to be great or little, to be moved ſlowly or ſwiftly one way or another, are modes of material exiſtence, all equally alien from the nature of cogitation. If matter be once without thought, it can only be made to think by ſome new modification, but all the modifications which it can admit are equally unconnected with cogitative powers."

"But the materialiſts, ſaid the aſtronomer, urge that matter may have qualities with which we are unacquainted."

"He who will determine, returned Imlac, againſt that which he knows, becauſe there may be ſomething which he knows not; he that can ſet hypothetical poſſibility againſt acknowledged certainty, is not

to

to be admitted among reaſonable being. All that we know of matter is, that matter is inert, ſenſeleſs and lifeleſs; and if this conviction cannot be oppoſed but by referring us to ſomething that we know not, we have all the evidence that human intellect can admit. If that which is known may be over-ruled by that which is unknown, no being, not omniſcient, can arrive at certainty."

"Yet let us not, ſaid the aſtronomer, too arrogantly limit the Creator's power."

"It is no limitation of omnipotence, replied the poet, to ſuppoſe that one thing is not conſiſtent with another, that the ſame propoſition cannot be at once true and falſe, that the ſame number cannot be even and odd, that cogitation

tation cannot be conferred on that which is created incapable of cogitation."

"I know not, ſaid Nekayah, any great uſe of this queſtion. Does that immateriality, which, in my opinion, you have ſufficiently proved, neceſſarily include eternal duration?"

"Of immateriality, ſaid Imlac, our ideas are negative, and therefore obſcure. Immateriality ſeems to imply a natural power of perpetual duration as a conſequence of exemption from all cauſes of decay: whatever periſhes is deſtroyed by the ſolution of its contexture, and ſeparation of its parts; nor can we conceive how that which has no parts, and therefore admits no ſolution, can be naturally corrupted or impaired."

"I know not, ſaid Raſſelas, how to conceive any thing without extenſion: what is extended muſt have parts, and you allow, that whatever has parts may be deſtroyed."

"Conſider your own conceptions, replied Imlac, and the difficulty will be leſs. You will find ſubſtance without extenſion. An ideal form is no leſs real than material bulk: yet an ideal form has no extenſion. It is no leſs certain, when you think on a pyramid, that your mind poſſeſſes the idea of a pyramid, than that the pyramid itſelf is ſtanding. What ſpace does the idea of a pyramid occupy more than the idea of a grain of corn? or how can either idea ſuffer laceration? As is the effect ſuch is the cauſe; as thought

thought is, ſuch is the power that thinks; a power impaſſive and indiſcerpible."

"But the Being, ſaid Nekayah, whom I fear to name, the Being which made the ſoul, can deſtroy it."

"He, ſurely, can deſtroy it, anſwered Imlac, ſince, however unperiſhable, it receives from a ſuperiour nature its power of duration. That it will not periſh by any inherent cauſe of decay, or principle of corruption, may be ſhown by philoſophy; but philoſophy can tell no more. That it will not be annihilated by him that made it, we muſt humbly learn from higher authority."

The whole aſſembly ſtood a while ſilent and collected. "Let us return, ſaid Raſſelas, from this ſcene of mortality.

How gloomy would be theſe manſions of the dead to him who did not know that he ſhall never die; that what now acts ſhall continue its agency, and what now thinks ſhall think on for ever. Thoſe that lie here ſtretched before us, the wiſe and the powerful of antient times, warn us to remember the ſhortneſs of our preſent ſtate: they were, perhaps, ſnatched away while they were buſy, like us, in the choice of life."

"To me, ſaid the princeſs, the choice of life is become leſs important; I hope hereafter to think only on the choice of eternity."

They then haſtened out of the caverns, and, under the protection of their guard, returned to Cairo.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIX.

The concluſion, in which nothing is concluded.

IT was now the time of the inundation of the Nile: a few days after their viſit to the catacombs, the river began to riſe.

They were confined to their houſe. The whole region being under water gave them no invitation to any excurſions, and, being well ſupplied with materials for talk, they diverted themſelves with compariſons of the different forms of life which they had obſerved, and with various ſchemes of happineſs which each of them had formed.

Pekuah was never ſo much charmed with any place as the convent of St. Anthony, where the Arab reſtored her to the princeſs, and wiſhed only to fill it with pious maidens, and to be made prioreſs of the order: ſhe was weary of expectation and diſguſt, and would gladly be fixed in ſome unvariable ſtate.

The princeſs thought, that of all ſublunary things, knowledge was the beſt: She deſired firſt to learn all ſciences, and then purpoſed to found a college of learned women, in which ſhe would preſide, that, by converſing with the old, and educating the young, ſhe might divide her time between the acquiſition and communication of wiſdom, and raiſe up for the next age models of prudence, and patterns of piety.

The

The prince desired a little kingdom, in which he might administer justice in his own person, and see all the parts of government with his own eyes; but he could never fix the limits of his dominion, and was always adding to the number of his subjects.

Imlac and the astronomer were contented to be driven along the stream of life without directing their course to any particular port.

Of these wishes that they had formed they well knew that none could be obtained. They deliberated a while what was to be done, and resolved, when the inundation should cease, to return to Abissinia.

FINIS.